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MISSION STATEMENT

We promise to:

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From the Editor



As I began to think about writing this column, I was initially determined to not discuss the COVID situation again but it does indeed permeate almost every business and political decision.

In today's rapidly changing world, it is never easy to make accurate forecasts beyond the very short term, but COVID has brought the difficulty in business planning to a whole new level.

It seems increasingly apparent

that we will need to live with COVID for the foreseeable future and act to minimise its impacts.

Perhaps, with the help of an increased focus on hygiene, the total deaths and hospitalisations from contagious diseases may even decrease from pre-COVID rates.

It appears that NSW is planning a stepped reopening, with substantial changes starting from around mid-October. Fully vaccinated people are likely to have more freedoms earlier. This will no doubt attract the ire from some people but is a sensible approach in risk management.

Some businesses are also looking at making full vaccinations compulsory for their staff. Whether a particular business can bring in these rules is not completely clear cut but a subject that business owners need to consider. A story on page 24 of this issue discusses this subject further.

As well as the health of staff in terms of catching COVID, business owners and the wider community must also consider the mental health of individuals, particularly in terms of lockdown and the associated challenges it brings such as home schooling. In terms of mental health, we also need to acknowledge that people hate the unknown and it increases anxiety in most people. A clear COVID business plan will not eliminate this anxiety but will definitely help. See the story on page 17 for some further discussion.

Our thoughts are with all those struggling at the moment and hope that very soon the way out of COVID management will be clearer and we move to a new normal.

Garry Hardie
Publisher & Editor

ON THIS MONTH'S COVER

Environmental Officer Hayley Ardagh from Newcastle Coal Infrastructure Group (NCIG).

NCIG was the winner of the Gold Safety Helmet in the WHS Business of the Year category at the recently announced Hunter Safety Awards. See page 22 for further details.



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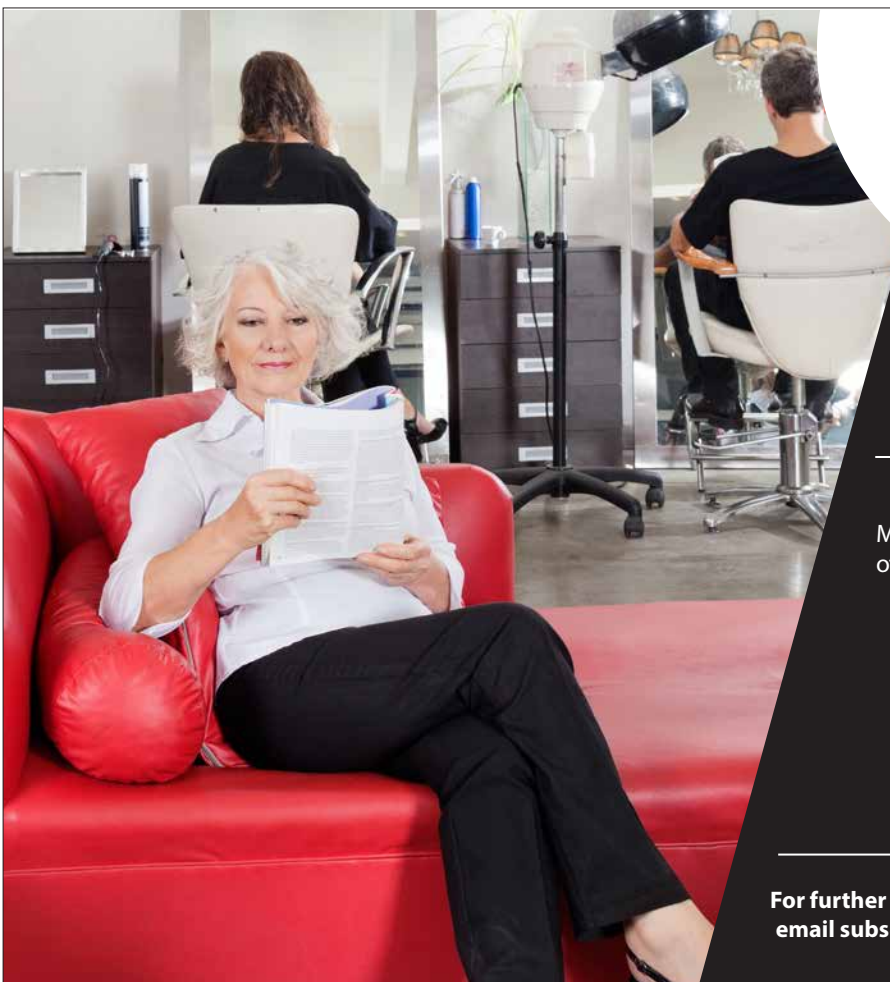
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Community frocks up to raise vital funds

After having to cancel last year's Pink Race Day due to COVID-19, ClubsNSW and the Hunter Breast Cancer Foundation (HBCF) were grateful the 2021 event could go ahead, raising \$90,000 for HBCF.

Whilst the recent COVID-19 restrictions posed an impact on the event, the Newcastle Jockey Club, ClubsNSW and HBCF made necessary arrangements to ensure all participants were safe.

President of ClubsNSW in the Newcastle and Hunter Valley region, Scott Williams said that the health and safety of the community is paramount.

"COVID-19 had taught us all to be agile and adaptable particularly when organising an event. Rather than postponing the day, we made the necessary modifications so that all attendees were safe," Scott said.

Being a community funded charity, HBCF relies on the support of days like Pink Race Day to be able to continue the work they do in the local community.

HBCF's General Manager, Ellie Wells said whilst COVID-19 has presented many challenges for the foundation, the local community has continued to be extremely supportive.

Even though the event could only host half of its attendees, the day was still able to raise more than \$90,000 to support HBCF and the work they do within the local community.

"We are incredibly grateful to everyone who supported us on the day. Whether that was through attending the event, donating a prize or a virtual donation your contribution makes a significant difference to the work we do," Ellie said.



Abbey McDonell, Gracyn Endacott & Claudia Tolhurst at Pink Race Day, Pink Race Day 2021

Pink Race Day acknowledges the longstanding partnership between Clubs of Newcastle and HBCF. Since 2009, Pink Race Day has raised more than \$370,000 to help HBCF continue to provide vital services to individuals and families as they navigate their way through breast cancer.



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Continued activation of unused space in National Park

inner Newcastle's National Park.

Newcastle City Lord Mayor Nuatali Nelmes said the decision to add four basketball courts was based on the popularity of the existing courts since opening in September last year.

"Each weekend, hundreds of mostly young people flock to National Park to use the blue basketball courts and the green space located on the site of the former bowling club building," Cr Nelmes said.

"Based on the demand, we're continuing our re-activation of the former tennis courts located near the corner of National Park and Parry Streets by increasing the total number of basketball courts to six.

"By delivering four additional courts, we're increasing the opportunity for our community to get outdoors to participate in casual sport and exercise."

Seating, shade shelters and a drinking fountain will also be installed as part of the work, with lighting to be considered during the development of the National Park Plan of Management and associated Landscape Masterplan.

The Lord Mayor said the long-term future of the space would be determined through the National Park Plan of Management and Landscape Masterplan.

Work is about to start to triple the number of basketball courts located within

dining experiences inspired by the local agricultural heritage and of course, winemaking, distilling and brewing.

The proposed \$107 million project will bring 68,045 additional visitors to the region and inject an additional \$33 million each year, according to the REMPLAN economic modelling.

Development plans for Cedar Mill Hunter Valley will be lodged in the coming months, with the construction phase projected to create over 500 new jobs (215 direct, 285 indirect) and inject \$207.5 million through build costs, job creation, supply chain and consumption.

Winarch Capital CEO, Paul Lambess, said once Cedar Mill Hunter Valley opens its doors it will create hundreds of new jobs and bolster the local economy, and the events and tourism sectors.

Cedar Mill is also actively searching for future sites across Australia.

Financial Advice leaders join

On 11th August 2021, Armcrest Financial Advice merged with Newcastle Financial

Planning Group (NFPG).

NFPG forms part of Coastal Advice Group (CAG), a leading financial planning practice operating across four locations in New South Wales: Central Coast, Sydney, Port Macquarie and Newcastle.

Daniel Brown, CEO of CAG, said the merging of the two advice businesses will allow them to further expand their skillset and experience to deliver even more value to the existing clients of the two businesses as well as future clients.

"This acquisition increases the scale and depth of experience in our advice team which will only benefit our clients' lives. As a growing team, we are always looking for ways we can provide better services, greater support and more resources to our collective clients."

Tom Momsen, Managing Director of Armcrest Financial Planning, has 14 years' experience in the financial advice industry and is excited about uniting with CAG to be able to support more Novocastrians.

"The entire Armcrest team is really excited by this merge and to join forces with such a highly motivated team. We have some big developments coming over the next 12 months and we are confident this will only result in better outcomes for all."

Following the official merger, Tom has now moved into the role of Head of Advice and Senior Financial Adviser where he will coordinate and mentor all the financial advisers across CAG while still servicing his valued client base. Tom is joined by two advice support staff including a Paraplanner/Head of Compliance and a Client Success Manager.

Tom and Daniel have had a professional relationship for 14 years and have previously worked together. Daniel said he is looking forward to seeing the new dynamic that Tom will bring to the CAG team.

CAG is currently opening a new advice practice in Port Macquarie and has plans to establish additional practices on the Mid-North Coast.

Tom Momsen and Daniel Brown



Lord Mayor Nuatali Nelmes and young basketballers shoot hoops at the opening of the existing National Park basketball courts (September 2020).



Cedar Mill Group acquires Pokolbin site for amphitheatre and tourism project

Winarch Capital's Cedar Mill Group has acquired a premium development site in Pokolbin for its second purpose-

built outdoor amphitheatre and tourism project, expected to open in 2023 at a cost of \$107 million.

It follows the previously announced \$235 million redevelopment of Morisset Golf Course, to be known as Cedar Mill Lake Macquarie, with plans for a 30,000 person concert venue, cafes and restaurants, accommodation and Australia's largest aquatic play park.

The new property is on the corner of Broke and McDonalds Roads and sits adjacent to the Roche Estate food and beverage precinct and next to the Hope Estate winery.

There are plans for Cedar Mill Hunter Valley to house a 100-bed hotel, specialist food and beverage, a wine museum, multiple cellar doors and a 22,000 person concert venue to host events from some of the biggest local and international acts touring Australia.

The vision for the site includes the delivery of a venue that is also capable of hosting events, conferences and functions, and attract tourists seeking high-end visitor experiences. This includes local growers and operators providing boutique goods and

Newcastle to benefit from \$24 million recycling infrastructure fund

funded jointly by the Federal and State Governments.

Federal Minister for the Environment Sussan Ley announced \$24 million in funding in a statewide infrastructure roll out that will increase the state's recycling capacity by 120,000 tonnes a year, and generate industry investment of \$59 million.

"This is about easing pressure on our environment and taking responsibility for our waste by recycling more materials, creating more jobs and driving economic investment.

Liberal Patron Senator for the Hunter Region Hollie Hughes said "this project will establish a new \$40 million regional Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) at the Summerhill Waste Management Centre (SWMC) to recycle waste glass, plastic, tyres, paper and cardboard in Newcastle.

"I am delighted to announce that the Summerhill Waste Management Centre in Wallsend will be playing its part in transforming our recycling capacity.

"The Australian and NSW governments have co-invested \$5 million for this project (\$2.5 million each), and industry has contributed a further \$35.8 million. This is about easing pressure on our environment by recycling more materials including plastics, tyres, glass, cardboard and even coffee cups, and importantly it is about creating jobs and economic investment.

"This funding and these new projects will help to boost our existing recycling capabilities, supportive innovative re-use of recycled materials and boost NSW's recycling capacity," said Senator Hughes.

The City of Newcastle has joined the Federal Government's transformation of Australia's recycling industry as one of 22 NSW projects

The Federal Government is investing \$190 million in the Recycling Modernisation Fund (RMF), which together with state and industry investment will generate more than \$600 million in recycling infrastructure.

Hunter Valley dominates Shiraz and Semillon at Australian wine awards

The Hunter Valley wine region has again taken out two of the prestigious top varietal awards at this year's 2022 Halliday Wine Companion Awards.

For the second year in a row, and the third time in seven years, the Hunter Valley has won the best Shiraz of the year with the 2019 Tyrrell's 4 Acres Shiraz claiming the title. Semillon of the Year was awarded to Meerea Park for their 2011 Alexander Munro Individual Vineyard Aged Release Semillon.

These awards cement the Hunter Valley's reputation for producing world class Shiraz and Semillon varietals. This significant result for the Hunter Valley comes on the back of the Brokenwood win at the 2021 awards for the Brokenwood Graveyard Shiraz 2018. Two of the three finalists for 2022 Shiraz of the Year came from the Hunter Valley: Tyrrell's and Mount Pleasant.



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New alliance for Hunter Valley Resort

The Hele family own Hunter Valley's longest continuously operating hospitality venue

celebrating its 30th anniversary on 1 August and are taking things to new heights, announcing an alliance with the northern beaches 4 Pines Brewing brand.

Hunter Valley Resort's Philip Helé OAM is a name long associated with hospitality. His family hail from Denmark. Helé's Great Grandparents owned the famous Grand Hotel in Copenhagen, his hotelier Grandparents were the official caterer to the King Frederik IV of Denmark and Queen Ingrid for many years, and his parents both worked for the Hilton Hotels group worldwide until settling in Australia in the 1960's

After years of owning hotels such as The Sackville in Balmain, The Ascot in Wahroonga, Bel Air in Newcastle and the Yachtsman in Lake Macquarie, was the creation of the quintessential Australian Grill with buffet.

It was 1991 when they purchased the Hunter Valley Resort on Hermitage Road, they brought bistro dining to the Hunter Valley. Now, the Helé's are taking bistro dining up another notch, working with the team at 4 Pines Brewing to bring their established brand to the Hunter Valley. Also being rebranded is the Adventure Centre, now known as the Hunter Farm.

No strangers to the brewery business, the Helé's together with advertising guru John Singleton launched the region's first craft brewery Bluetongue, which started a shift in offerings in the state's most visited regional destination that was previously primarily known as a wine region.

In 2014, Phil Helé was awarded the Order of Australia Medal (OAM) for services to Australian Tourism and the Hunter Valley for his contribution to tourism in the region.



Newcastle Museum notches up 10 years at Honeysuckle

It's welcomed almost 1.5 million visitors, won 20 state and national awards, displayed 71 exhibitions and held

thousands of special events – but after a decade at Honeysuckle there's still more to discover at Newcastle Museum.

4 August marked the 10th anniversary since the Museum opened its doors at Honeysuckle after transforming the former Railway Workshops into a state-of-the-art cultural facility.

Newcastle Lord Mayor Nuatali Nelmes said Newcastle Museum is one of the jewels in the city's cultural crown.

"Newcastle Museum plays a key role in the rich diversity of experiences that help attract visitors to our city," Cr Nelmes said.

"The award-winning Museum is on the cutting edge of contemporary museum practice and has been nationally recognised for its innovative exhibitions, which create insightful and immersive ways to interpret and preserve our city's fascinating history.

"Upgrading and expanding this critical facility through its move to Honeysuckle saw the Museum become a cornerstone of the wider Civic cultural precinct.

"I'm proud to see how much it has achieved during the past 10 years and I can't wait to experience what else it has in store during the next decade and beyond."

Newcastle Museum Director Julie Baird said it had been amazing to see the transformation both within the Museum's Heritage-

listed buildings and in the surrounding landscape over the years.

"The Museum's transformation will continue following the mass planting of various native tree species in four sections of Museum Park yesterday as part of the Museum's Living Labels project, Ms Baird said.

"The trees and shrubs planted relate directly to objects within the Museum's collection and offer a new way to interpret and understand Newcastle's geography and history, providing a living connection between the natural landscape and the stories of our past.

"We plan to celebrate the Museum's significant milestone with activities across the next 12 months, kicking off with a 10th anniversary exhibition showcasing specially commissioned works by much-loved local artist Trevor Dickinson, whose colourful, larger-than-life murals including the Newcastle Museum Photowall have formed such an intrinsic part of the Museum and its surrounds."

New approach to tackling mosquito-borne disease in the Hunter

New research to tackle one of Australia's most prolific mosquitos, responsible for spreading most cases of Ross River virus, has

commenced in the Hunter.

The three-year project, between the University of Newcastle, Australia's national science agency CSIRO, the NSW Department of Health and the University of Melbourne, will use genomic sequencing to inform suppression strategies for the *Aedes vigilax* mosquito.

The *Aedes vigilax* is one of the most widespread mosquito species in Australia predominantly originating from coastal wetlands like salt marshes, mangroves and swamps. It can fly many kilometres within a lifetime and spreads the Ross River virus, the most reported mosquito-borne disease in Australia with more than 4,000 cases reported yearly.

CSIRO research scientist Dr Brendan Trewin said the project would be underpinned by new advances in genomic sequencing.

"Advances in technology mean we can sequence tiny amounts of DNA to track genetic differences of individual mosquito genomes and find distinct populations – a technique which has not been applied to this species before," Dr Trewin said.

"This information will provide the foundation for the next phase of the project, which will assess the feasibility of controlling the Hunter *Aedes vigilax* population with Wolbachia, a natural bacteria which has been successfully used to suppress vector-borne disease in over 13 countries including here in Australia."

Using this genomic sequence approach, the team will be able to look at closely related mosquito populations in finer detail and determine relationships within and between populations in the Hunter estuary, Lake Macquarie, Port Stephens and throughout Australia.

Dr Toby Mills, researcher from the University of Newcastle's School of Environmental and Life Sciences, said the study was an important step towards informing decision making efforts to control mosquito populations in the Hunter and elsewhere across Australia.

"The project is a part of the University of Newcastle's Grand Challenge, to reduce the burden that mosquitoes impose on human health and lessen the nuisance factor inflicted by mosquitoes in urban areas, including the Callaghan campus," Dr Mills said.

"Following on from the collaborative genomics and trapping program we will also be running a bi-monthly surveillance program through autumn, winter and spring to identify the presence of the mosquito 'off-season'.

"In addition, we have developed an insectary and established *Aedes vigilax* colonies to further the research aims of the project."

CSIRO has extensive expertise working with communities across Australia to prevent the spread of mosquito-borne diseases. A 2018 landmark trial led by CSIRO, Verily and James Cook University successfully eradicated more than 80% of the invasive disease-spreading *Aedes aegypti* mosquito in Innisfail, Queensland.

Port of Newcastle sets its sights on diversifying for the future

With trade worth prosperity of the Hunter and much of regional NSW, is tied to the global trade gateway that Port of Newcastle provides.

"We have handled

a mix of trade for 222 years and bring more than 25 different cargoes through our deepwater global gateway, but we have our sights set on more," shares Port of Newcastle CEO Craig Carmody.

"As the world's largest coal exporting port, it is imperative for Port of Newcastle to focus on diversification to ensure a sustainable and economically resilient business for the future."

To achieve this diversification and improve its existing operations, Port of Newcastle has plans to invest millions of dollars in new infrastructure over the next five years.

"These investments, such as the Port's recent announcement of the \$28.4-million purchase of two Leibbher LHM 550 Mobile Harbour Cranes and associated infrastructure, will support diversification at the Port, improve efficiency in our operations, open the door to new customers and trade and create local jobs," said Craig.

"We are future-focused and community minded, and our strategic plans will pull levers that work to enable local and Australia-wide producers, businesses and manufacturers to more successfully compete in international markets."

Further underpinning the Port's future diversification plans is the expansion of clean energy trade and the game-changing \$2.4-billion Multi-purpose Deepwater Terminal project.

"We are firmly focused on seizing opportunities such as the container terminal, that will create a broad mix of trade opportunities that can help to support our local industry, boost jobs in addition to

the 9000 positions the Port directly and indirectly supports now, and build a prosperous local, state and national economy."

Furthermore, the Multi-purpose Deepwater Terminal investment would provide a viable alternative and more cost-effective export route for regional NSW farmers and manufacturers.

"A container terminal at Newcastle would increase regional NSW global competitiveness and allow these suppliers to avoid congested Sydney supply chains. A win-win for the region and regional NSW," said Craig.

For more on Port of Newcastle's activities and plans, visit www.portofnewcastle.com.au or follow the Port on Instagram, Facebook or LinkedIn.

Greater Bank awarded for commitment to customer service

Greater Bank's commitment to outstanding service has again been recognised, this time as part of Canstar's 2021 Customer Service Awards. The Hunter-based financial institution picked up two Most Satisfied Customer Awards - Customer Owned Bank and Online Banking.

This latest recognition comes on the back of the recently announced Money Magazine 2021 Consumer Finance Awards, where Greater Bank was named Customer-Owned Institution of the Year, and the 2021 Mozo People's Choice Awards, where it received five awards in the banking category.

Canstar's Customer Satisfaction Awards are based on how content customers are with a particular financial institution and complement its Star Ratings and Awards that are calculated by Canstar's expert researchers.

Greater Bank Chief Executive Officer, Scott Morgan, said the customer-owned bank's principals of mutuality and customer-centric values have long been its 'North Star' that guides the organisation as it works to provide customers and the communities it serves with banking solutions that genuinely meet their needs.



Port of Newcastle CEO Craig Carmody



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Community shapes new vision for Newcastle's Harbour Foreshore

showing an additional 4,000 sqm of playspace with more picnic areas, trees and gardens, cycleways, as well as new plans for the Wharf Road Precinct.

The updated concept includes increasing the size of the fenced regional-level accessible and inclusive playground, a significant waterplay space, a cultural heritage walk that links back to Newcastle's Indigenous heritage, and improvements along Wharf Road and Tug Berth Lane. Tree planting is planned throughout the inclusive playspace and the concept plan proposes a formal tree grove, which will link the two event spaces, The Grove and The Commons. Additional planting of an avenue of trees is proposed along Wharf Road.

Lord Mayor Nuatali Nelmes said that the revised concept, presented to the Harbour Foreshore Community Reference Group, includes a number of key changes to the preliminary concept plan based on community consultation undertaken earlier this year.

"This project is a great example of City of Newcastle working with our community to deliver its first regional-level recreational park and flexible open space that meets the needs and wants of those who will use Foreshore Park into the future," Cr Nelmes said.

"Our community provided valuable feedback which has helped shape the revised plans for Foreshore Park and I'd like to thank everyone who provided input, particularly our Community Reference Group members.

"In direct response to the community's feedback, revisions to the concept for Foreshore Park include the relocation of the inclusive 'Variety Livvi's Place' playspace and adjoining amenities, and provision for a multi-purpose rollerskating, scooting and performing arts area.

"We've also developed a concept plan to turn the Wharf Road Precinct into a world-class harbourside esplanade. We are doing this by improving the Joy Cummings promenade, parklands, connecting pathways and cycling infrastructure, improving access to the area, and creating new opportunities for our community and visitors to make the most of the magnificent waterfront location."

City of Newcastle has released its updated vision for Newcastle's Harbour Foreshore including a revised concept for Foreshore Park,

Hunter Water welcomes planning approval for Belmont desalination plant

issued by the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment for a desalination plant at Belmont to produce up to 30 million litres a day of drinking water in response to drought.

Hunter Water Managing Director, Darren Cleary, said the approval provides an additional source of safe and reliable drinking water for the region in the event of a severe drought.

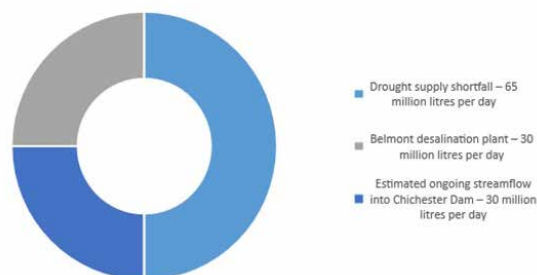
"Desalination is one of only a few water supply options that is rainfall independent, helping us to continue to support our customers and communities regardless of changes in weather or climate.

"The Lower Hunter community gained a sense of what a prolonged and severe drought would be like when we all experienced the most recent drought through 2019-2020, which saw the introduction of water restrictions for the first time in many decades," said Darren.

"The Belmont plant is now part of our region's ongoing water security package. Hunter Water is finalising the review of the Lower Hunter Water Security Plan, which will outline additional proposed supply and demand measures to ensure a resilient water

Hunter Water has welcomed the NSW Government's announcement that planning approval has been

Ongoing water supply during drought
Estimated minimum customer demands during drought – 125 million litres per day



supply for our region that caters for growth and can respond to the impacts of drought and climate variability," Darren continued.

The approved Belmont plant's water production capacity is double that originally proposed. The plant was increased from 15 million litres per day to 30 million litres per day to provide greater drought security and reliability, improve efficiency and deliver greater value for money for the Lower Hunter community.

The planning approval also confirms the direct ocean seawater intake system, which involves piping seawater from a kilometre offshore.

The approval is supported by comprehensive environmental impact investigations, which indicated that potential impacts can be mitigated through detailed design and delivery.

The planning work for the desalination plant has been considered in the review of the Lower Hunter Water Security Plan, which is exploring a range of supply and demand options for the Lower Hunter community.

Entrepreneurs set to bolster local economy

Thirty talented and entrepreneurial individuals have been selected to relocate to Newcastle as part of an Australian-first economic stimulus program.

The City's 'New Move' talent attraction program incentivised skilled professionals in existing and emerging industries to relocate to Newcastle with a \$10,000 grant to be spent in the Local Government Area.

Over 460 expressions of interest were received from around the globe including the Netherlands, Mexico, Hong Kong, Canada and India.

The '10,000 Reasons' digital marketing campaign has been viewed more than 5.5 million times, effectively promoting Newcastle as a city of opportunity.

The successful applicants bring expertise and investment in areas such as clean energy, defence, health and tech development like artificial intelligence, virtual and augmented reality. Several are start-up founders and will be establishing their business ventures in Newcastle.

At the same time as the New Move Program, City of Newcastle is investing almost \$400,000 in local training to connect locals with Newcastle's emerging economic opportunities. The NewSkills training program will be delivered by specialist training providers through workshops, self-paced learning, intensive programs and mentoring over the next 12 months.

From assisting businesses to become more inclusive, to building resilience to market disruptions including COVID-19, the NewSkills training programs seek to close skills gaps in the local workforce.

NewSkills follows the City's highly successful Tourism Product Development Program which provided 15 local businesses with training and business mentoring to develop new visitor experiences and products that leverage Newcastle's unique offering to visitors, to sustain and grow Newcastle's visitor economy.

Council saves \$70k, 71 Olympic swimming pools of water in one year

Water saving measures implemented in the 2019-20 financial year have saved Port Stephens Council

\$69,880 and 71 Olympic swimming pools of water according to water consumption data.

General Manager Wayne Wallis says the 178 ML saving in just one year has financial and environmental benefits for the community.

"Given the water restriction measures in place during the 2019-20 financial year, we developed a Drought Resilience Team to not only look at how we could save water but what we could do across all our major sites.

"The data told us that our annual drinking water consumption was between 217 ML and 268 ML across the Port Stephens local government area — with our holiday parks making up almost 39% of annual consumption, followed by sporting facilities and aquatic centres," he said.

Acting Facilities and Services Group Manager Tim Crosdale says upgrades to Council infrastructure are also responsible for the savings.

"We are currently rolling out our biggest Capital Works program ever across the region.

"Most of these water savings have been achieved by fixing leaks, upgrading water pipes and installing irrigation timing systems particularly in our holiday parks and recreation areas.

"As we replace aging infrastructure, we will install the most up-to-date water saving features. A great example is the upgrade at Fingal Bay Holiday Park where we're constructing a new amenities building with water saving features.

"We also worked with Sports Councils to see how water consumption could be reduced on our playing fields and replaced

the pool liner at Tomaree Aquatic Centre with a new fibreglass pool liner, which saved water in the process," Mr Crosdale said.

Port Stephens Council will continue to work with Hunter Water to identify opportunities to reduce our demand on water resources including using bore water, raw water or recycled water for drinking water where appropriate.

Rebrand for local electrician

Local electrician and business owner, Troy Powell, is celebrating 40 years in the electrical

industry this year with a major company rebrand.

Previously part of the Platinum Electricians franchise, Founder and Director Troy Powell decided to mark four decades by branching off his Newcastle division with a complete brand rehaul. The business is now operating under the name Powellect.

"Joining a franchise provided me with the support I needed to get started in business and I will be forever grateful for that. It set the foundations for me and what it means to have a successful business," Troy said.

"Which is really that communication is paramount to a successful customer relationship, whilst integrity is the basis upon which that relationship is built."

The rebrand and rename represents a significant step in the company's evolution, a locally owned company.



The new brand was developed through a collaborative process and reflects Troy's passion for the industry and his years of experience.

"This change has been made possible by our loyal customers and is very much appreciated. We will continue to provide our clients with the best service we can and look forward to positive times ahead," he said.

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Green light for MidCoast environment

It was a win for the local environment in the 28 July MidCoast council

meeting, when a series of programs and plans focussed on protecting, maintaining and restoring natural assets were adopted for implementation.

The green light was given to the region's first Biodiversity Framework, a roadmap that outlines a consolidated approach to conserving our natural heritage, along with the Manning River Estuary and Catchment Management Program, and the Greening Strategy. All three programs come off the back of extensive community consultation.

"This is an outstanding result and the culmination of a significant body of work, undertaken not only by staff over months and in some cases years, but with the input of a diverse range of stakeholders and community members from across the region", explained Gerard Tuckerman, MidCoast Council's Manager of Natural Systems.

"We now have the tools in place to protect and manage our unique natural environment for future generations, and to enhance the liveability of our towns and villages that the MidCoast is renowned for".

The ten-year Manning River Estuary and Catchment Management Program addresses the impact of land-use on water quality and ecosystem health. It acknowledges the importance of the river and estuary for recreation, wildlife, clean drinking water, to support agriculture, and in delivering cultural connections.

The Greening Strategy outlines a series of actions designed to manage and enhance tree canopy cover and green spaces, with a particular focus in built-up areas.

"While each program has its own goals, objectives and outcomes, as a suite of documents they provide a solid foundation for implementing an on-going series of initiatives, in conjunction

with community groups, landholders and other government agencies, to protect our environment".

They follow the adoption of MidCoast Council's Climate Change Policy earlier this year.

Approval was also given in the July council meeting to proceed with a region-wide Vegetation Management Policy, along with the adoption of a flying-fox camp management plan targeting areas in Forster, Pacific Palms, Smiths Lake and Hawks Nest. The Vegetation Management Policy focuses on retaining significant trees and tracts of mature vegetation through a targeted approach. Once introduced later this year, it will replace the existing Tree Preservation Order in the Great Lakes region.

Newcastle researcher-led team developing defences for the battleground of the future

A team of cognitive scientists, led by Dr Scott Brown and Dr Ami Eidels of the University of Newcastle's School of Psychological Sciences, has received a grant of \$756,538 over three years to help prepare Australia for the battleground of the future – cyberspace.

The project team will investigate the development of robust human-bot teams in the pursuit of cybersecurity – a critical area of national defence and one in which bots play a central role due to the sheer volume of malicious attacks that occur.

This project combines the psychological expertise of cognitive scientists with the expertise of computer scientists. The team is investigating how best to develop trust between humans and bots, as well as ways to ensure the bots present the masses of data they accrue in a way that doesn't overload human cognitive capacity.

A true cross-disciplinary investigation, Dr Brown's team consists of eight researchers funded by the Australia-US Multidisciplinary University Research Initiative (AUSMURI), who bring together expertise in cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, human-computer interaction, psychology, and decision sciences.

2022 HUNTER INVESTMENT PROSPECTUS NOW SEEKING SUPPORT



We are currently seeking support for the 2022 edition of the Hunter Business Investment Prospectus, the annual hard copy and online publication that promotes the Hunter Region as a smart business, investment and lifestyle choice.

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* The National Listener Survey - Newcastle 2020 Survey Wave #1

Commercial landlords doing the heavy lifting as banks enjoy the profits

Steven Dick
Movable

COVID, COVID, COVID, we just can't escape it.

When we thought we'd managed the pandemic and outshone the world in our handling of COVID-19, it turns around and bites us again, and unfortunately commercial property landlords are being forced to cop the biggest bites, while the banks sit idly by.

But before we dive into that analysis, let me indulge in a couple of COVID observations. The latest outbreaks have proven the nature of this beast and that it will always find any chinks in a dodgy defence.

So now zero case numbers are unattainable, vaccinations have become the go. I'm fully vaxed so that you know. But I can't help feeling I'm just a pawn in some disaster movie wherein two years there's an oops sorry from the government: "we thought we were doing the right thing at the time." It would be a fantastic lead into a new Zombie Apocalypse movie if it weren't so real.

Managing with less government support

Forget my overactive imagination. We must survive through the pandemic first, and unlike the first wave last year where Government assistance was long, deep, and unquestioning this time round, the money isn't so widely spread.

When it comes to small businesses, some grants are available, yet landlords are now required to assist struggling tenants without any real relief for their circumstances.

Tenant relief from the landlord

For a tenant to activate the landlord's obligations under the Retail and Other Commercial Leases (COVID-19) Amendment Regulation 2021, there are several trigger points:

1. The tenant must be a party to a lease before June 26, 2021; and
2. Have an annual turnover of under \$50M from the last financial year to June 30, 2021.
3. Qualify for one or more of the following grants:
 - Micro-business COVID-19 Support Grant.
 - COVID-19 NSW Business Grant.
 - Job Saver Grant.

Moreover, the landlord must use both the regulation and National Cabinet Mandatory Code of Conduct-SME Commercial Leasing Principles During COVID-19 (the National Principles) as a framework.

1. The Lessee must be a qualified COVID Impacted Lessee and supply evidence of such. If you have been approved for one of the above grants, you can send us confirmation of your approval as this qualifies you as COVID Impacted.
2. We will also require some financial information to determine your downturn in revenue, which we will evaluate as a percentage. Per Service NSW, to assess your downturn in revenue, the following periods can be used.
3. A minimum 14-day consecutive period between 26/06/21 to 28/08/21 inclusive. Newcastle & Hunter lockdown commenced at 5 pm on 05/08/21; compared against,
4. The same period in 2019, 2020 or between June 12, 2021, and June 25, 2021.

Please see below an example of the determination of downturn as a percentage, using 2019 revenue:

- 2021 revenue between 05/08/21 and 19/08/21 \$35,000
- 2019 revenue between 05/08/19 and 19/08/19 \$50,000

This represents a downturn of \$15,000 which is 30%, which is the percentage we will use when determining rent relief.

Using the National Principles framework, in the case of the example above:

- If your rent is \$1500 + GST per month, your monthly rent is reduced by 30% to \$1050.00. This means the rent will decrease by \$450 + GST per month.

50% of the \$450.00 (225.00 + GST) will be waived and, 50% of the \$450.00 (\$225 + GST) will be deferred. This amount will be repaid across an agreed period.

Plus, a tenant in these circumstances is protected from any punitive action under the lease, such as:

- Penalty interest
- Eviction
- Lockout
- Pressure to pay rent
- Forfeiture of security (bond, bank guarantee)

Landlord assistance from the government

At this stage, landlord support only amounts to Land Tax relief for the rent lost should the property owner waive these payments. There is talk of up to \$3,000 per month. However, this has not yet been decided.

Most landlords are not mega-corporations. They are mums and dad's investors who have saved hard to acquire real estate, and it is these people who must fund the tenants. Yet, when they turn to their financier, will they receive a waiver on their interest liabilities? Not at all, and at best they can hope for is a deferral on loan repayments. However, in doing this, the banks make more money in the long run.

When the Commonwealth Bank of Australia pats itself on the back for making an \$8.7 billion profit, this is wrong given the current pain for some of their customers. Worse is the gloating that the profits are going to the shareholders, which is also WRONG. What is closer to the mark is that the dividends are going to the "Faceless Five", as described by Andre Leigh in the Sydney Morning Herald a few years ago. These overseas institutional investors own 48.98% of one of our biggest banks.

So, to my way of thinking, now is the time for our banks dig deep and assist their supposed customers, especially when at a minimum, almost half of shareholder earnings are going overseas.

For further information contact Movable on (02) 4915 3000



Steve Dick is a director of Newcastle's leading residential and commercial real estate firm, Movable.

Regional housing affordability deteriorates faster than capital cities

"Housing affordability has deteriorated over the past year as house prices rose faster than the capacity of the typical household to repay a mortgage," stated HIA Economist Tom Devitt.

HIA's Affordability Index is calculated for each of the eight capital cities and regional areas on a quarterly basis and takes into account the latest dwelling prices, mortgage interest rates and wage developments.

"Affordability deteriorated across all states and territories, including both the capital cities and their surrounding regions," added Mr Devitt.

"Over the past two decades, housing affordability was a greater challenge in Sydney and Melbourne than the rest of the country.



Yet since the pandemic began it is the rest of the country that has seen a faster deterioration in affordability.

"This is not surprising given the rapid exodus of population out of Sydney and Melbourne to other states and regions.

"The number of people who left Sydney and Melbourne in the last year was tens of thousands more than the number of people who arrived. This is not unusual for Sydney but was a uniquely damaging development for Melbourne.

"In addition to this, Sydney and Melbourne suffered disproportionately from the closure of international borders and the associated loss of overseas migrant, student and tourist arrivals.

"This is why the deterioration in housing affordability was most acute outside of Sydney and Melbourne.

"Despite this deterioration, housing is still broadly more affordable than the average of the past 20 years, due to the record low interest rates making it easier to service a typical mortgage," concluded Mr Devitt.

The most significant deterioration in affordability in the capital cities occurred in Hobart, with an 18.7% decline in 2020/21. This was followed by Darwin (-13.0%), Canberra (-10.2%), Adelaide (-8.7%), Brisbane (-6.3%) and Perth (-5.5%). Affordability in Sydney and Melbourne declined by just 3.3% and 3.8% respectively.

Across the regions, regional New South Wales saw the biggest deterioration in affordability in the nation, down by 22.8% over the year. This was followed by regional Tasmania (-13.6%), regional Queensland (-10.3%), regional Northern Territory (-8.6%), regional South Australia (-8.1%), and regional Victoria (-6.5%). Regional Western Australia saw the smallest deterioration, with affordability declining by just 0.6% for the year.

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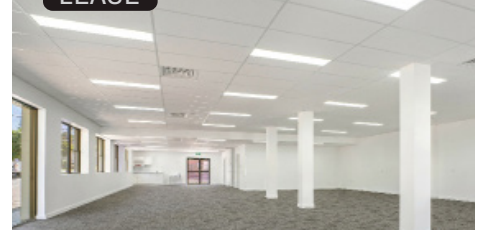
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793 Tomago Road, Tomago 71m² - 400m²

Shell Service Centre offering new showrooms + retail shops.
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137-139 Maitland Road, Mayfield 334m²

Newly refurbished on busy road with (8) secure car parks.
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LEASE



2/38 Shipley Drive Rutherford 520m²

Modern industrial unit with showroom, warehouse and exposure.
Lease \$49,000pa + OGs + GST PAUL TILDEN 0425 302 772

movable.com.au



LAMBOURNE PARTNERS

Lambourne Partners has welcomed **Ron Holmes** to its Wealth division to advise on portfolio construction. Ron has 37 years' experience in the wealth advisory industry and specialises in fund and investment asset analysis. Ron commenced his role with Lambourne Partners the first week of August.



DIAMOND IT

Diamond IT has appointed **David Howdle** as Project and Business Improvement Lead. With a career in technology spanning over 25 years, David has extensive experience in disciplines including architecture design, infrastructure management, project management, service delivery, software development and product management. At Diamond IT, David is responsible for initiating, managing and evaluating internal and customer facing projects and activities to promote a culture of continuous improvement and learning.



AUST. BUSINESS LAWYERS & ADVISORS

Head of ABLA's Corporate and Commercial team in Newcastle, **Suzie Leask**, has been appointed as a Director of the national firm. Suzie advises private, government and not-for-profit clients in a broad range of sectors on all aspects of corporate and commercial law. She joined ABLA after working for a top-tier Sydney law firm and as in-house Legal Counsel for a global firm. Her expertise has been recognised in several awards including NSW Women Lawyers' Private Practice Lawyer of The Year.



MORAY & AGNEW

Moray & Agnew Newcastle has welcomed special counsel **Ashley Cooper** back to its construction & projects team. A skilled lawyer with 10 years' experience, Ashley previously worked in the construction & projects team for 5 years, before moving to an in-house legal counsel role in one of Australia's leading logistics and supply chain companies in 2016. Ashley practices in construction and commercial law, principally with a focus on construction contracts, security of payment legislation, and commercial disputes.



MONTEATH & POWYS

Monteath & Powys has announced that one of the rising stars of the spatial industry, **Matt Richardson** has become a shareholder. Matt started with Monteath & Powys as part of the University of Newcastle Scholarship program, quickly establishing himself as a leader within the organisation and a leader within the surveying and spatial industry. Matt's tailor made 3D solutions have been integral to the success of many major projects throughout NSW.



REGIONAL AUSTRALIA BANK

Regional Australia Bank has appointed **Mark Amos** as Senior Manager Business Development. Mark is well known in the local financial services sector having worked for CBA for 19 years, PSi/ Nationwide Superannuation Fund for 6 years and the GM for JSA Group for the past 14 years. Regional Australia Bank is a customer owned bank with roots in regional NSW and has grown to be one of the premier banking alternatives to the 'Big Four' banks.



AUST. BUSINESS LAWYERS & ADVISORS

Kyle Scott has been appointed as a Director of the national firm. Kyle is Law Society of NSW Accredited Specialist in employment and industrial relations law. He has more than a decade's experience in managing complex terminations, enterprise bargaining, award compliance, post-employment restraints and employment litigation. His expertise is demonstrated by the fact that he is recommended in the DoYLES Guide and the Legal 500 Asia and Pacific lists of top employment lawyers.



BUSINESS HUNTER

Amanda Watson has joined Business Hunter as Policy and Public Affairs Manager. Amanda has extensive experience in strategic communication, media, member relations, and policy and governance. Her career includes close to ten years in executive advisory roles in higher education, as well as similar roles across government, business, health and not-for-profit sectors. Business Hunter welcomes Amanda and looks forward to her contribution to the interests of Business Hunter, their members and the region.

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PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY IN TIMES OF COVID

Julia Koller Smith
NewPsych Psychologists

The Wellbeing Lab's 2019-2021 Workplace Report of findings from a representative sample of full-time workers across Australia provides helpful insights into the impact of COVID on worker wellbeing, defined as "the ability to feel good and function effectively". The results found that over the past year, the proportion of workers stating they would never speak up if they were struggling has doubled to 40%, and those who didn't share their struggles were significantly more likely to report lower levels of psychological safety in the workplace.

Professor Amy C. Edmonson of the Harvard Business School is an expert of psychological safety, defined as "a belief that one will not be punished or humiliated for speaking up with ideas, questions, concerns, or mistakes." Psychological safety is the key to optimal team and organisational performance, as well as being a crucial aspect of individual wellbeing. Prof Edmonson suggests the psychological safety of an organisation can be measured across four dimensions;

- 1. Attitude to risk and failure** – do team members feel there is space to make mistakes?
- 2. Open conversations** – are people able to talk openly about difficult things?
- 3. Willingness to help** – do team members help each other?
- 4. Inclusivity and diversity** – can all people be welcomed?

Improving an organisation's psychological safety requires real

introspection about organisational values as well as concerted effort to change. Everyone, especially the leaders, can choose to support risk-taking and individuality, be clear and kind when people make a mistake, and foster openness and cooperation.

Safe Work Australia describe the key hazards to psychological health and safety at work as high or very low job demands, low job control, poor supervisor and co-worker support, poor workplace relationships, role conflict and ambiguity, poorly managed change, low recognition and reward, injustice, bullying harassment and violence, and poor environmental conditions. Covid has impacted upon these hazards as workplaces rapidly adjust to working from home, changes to workload and hours, rapid changes and organisational decision-making over which employees may have had limited control or input, as well as less contact with co-workers and managers.

Safe Work Australia present a systematic approach to ensuring people's psychological health and safety in the workplace, encompassing three elements:

- 1. Prevent Harm** – identify, assess and minimise risks in consultation with workers
- 2. Intervene Early** – identify early signs of increased psychological stress or risk and provide additional support
- 3. Support Recovery** – timely support and ongoing monitoring to ensure strategies are effective

An effective Employee Assistance Program (EAP) assists organisations in all three of these areas, through mental health and wellbeing sessions promoting wellness, individual counselling, and interventions at an organisational and leadership level with leader support and training to promote psychological safety practices among teams, as well as building understanding and skill in supporting positive mental health at work.

Psychological safety builds fearless organisations



NewPsych – helping grow fearlessness across the Hunter
02 49265005 or newpsych.com.au



COPING WITH COVID

How can we best support ourselves and those around us during COVID? Over three live zoom sessions we discuss how to be better at stress, connect with our values, nurture our relationships and social networks, in order to maintain optimal mental health during COVID.

Contact NewPsych to secure this training for your organisation.

Given our recent return to lockdown, there has never been a more important time for businesses to ensure that their people's exposure to psychological hazards is reduced, and their psychological safety and wellbeing is supported. Use your EAP to promote a workplace that is genuinely supportive of psychological health, safety and overall wellbeing. The evidence from other countries suggests the wave that follows the virus and impacted businesses further beyond the financial costs is psychological distress. Assessing and addressing your business' psychological safety now is perhaps akin to getting in and vaccinating early.

NewPsych is a leading EAP provider for the Hunter. To discuss what NewPsych can offer to your business, call (02) 4926 5005 or email externalrelations@newpsych.com.au.



Julia Koller Smith works in External Relations at NewPsych Psychologists. She has a BPsych(Hons), MBusPsych and is a Member of AHRI.

COVID-19: Other options for businesses than mandatory vaccinations

Kyle Scott
Australian Business Lawyers & Advisors

With the Federal Government ruling out mandatory vaccinations, a leading Hunter employment lawyer says businesses have other measures to ensure they can continue to operate 'more normally' and protect the health of employees, customers, and visitors.

Vaccination is clearly the way out of economically damaging lockdowns and restrictions. Economists estimate the current lockdown is costing NSW around \$1 billion a week and impacting people's salaries and businesses bottom line and survival.

It is in everyone's interest for employers to facilitate the uptake of vaccinations.

The National Cabinet's four step plan strongly encourages vaccinations, but except for some high-risk sectors such as aged care, we are unlikely to see vaccinations mandated. We're likely to see regulatory measures in some sectors over mandating vaccination.

Mandating vaccinations is not straight-forward for businesses because of a range of laws including WHS, privacy and discrimination laws.

The legal test seems straightforward, but its application is very tricky.

An analogy is we know smoking cigarettes is bad, can even kill, but an employer can't or wouldn't issue a direction to staff requiring them to give up smoking.

Whether it is reasonable to require vaccination depends on the risks within the industry, the nature of the work being performed, and the amount of interaction staff members have with others.

Only after businesses have implemented control measures, and encouraged or incentivised employees to get vaccinated, should they look at mandating vaccinations.

Control measures include ensuring and enforcing physical distancing, good hygiene, mask wearing, and compliance with other public health order measures. Incentives to encourage staff to get vaccinated include paid leave to go and get vaccinated and other rewards such as vouchers or gifts.

Under work health and safety (WHS) statutes, businesses have a legal primary duty of care to employees and worksite visitors to take all steps that are reasonably practicable to ensure their



health and safety. Employers can issue reasonable and lawful directions to their employees, and employees must comply with those directions or face disciplinary action.

Workers' compensation may be an issue if a business directs vaccinations and then someone suffers an adverse reaction. But if employers don't encourage vaccination and a staff member contracts COVID-19 at work there can be a risk for the business.

WHS obligations don't necessarily require businesses to direct employees to be vaccinated but they likely mean businesses need to be encouraging employees to get vaccinated.

The other minefields for employers are staff who have a valid exemption from vaccination, asking for proof of vaccination and whether a business stops doing business with another business because their staff aren't vaccinated.

The Privacy Act means an employer generally can't collect proof of vaccination.

As a business, you can refuse to provide services to particular customers, and you can impose requirements on subcontractors or other businesses - with the exception that if someone has a valid medical exemption.

If an employee is refusing vaccination on philosophical grounds that would be a disciplinary matter.

Before moving to dismissal businesses can look to redeployment or alternative working arrangements such as working from home.

For more information please contact Kyle on 02 4989 1010 or email kyle.scott@ablawyers.com.au.



Kyle Scott heads up the Workplace and Employment team in the ABLA Newcastle office, bringing more than a decade's experience as a specialist employment and industrial relations lawyer. Partnering with HR managers, Kyle manages complex workplace issues, providing pragmatic and commercially-focussed advice that allows businesses to mitigate risks and make informed decisions.

Safety leadership for safer organisations

Sam Robinson
LKS Quaero

In too many organisations, safety is seen as a side concern. It's viewed as a set of boxes to be ticked rather than a core part of what every person does at work. Even where organisations are serious about safety, this often stops at the level of being compliance-focused or reactive.

It's vital for every organisation to have leaders who demonstrate strongly, clearly, and often that safety is central to how we operate every day. It's about having the behaviours and systems in place to get it done right now and generating continuous improvement for the future. Here's some advice for getting this done well.

Safety should be a felt responsibility for everyone in your organisation

Much of the time, safety is seen as owned by the WHS lead or department only, rather than as a personal or line management responsibility. Safety at work concerns everyone, and every person needs to understand their part to play.

Organisations should develop the skills of safety professionals and non-safety professionals alike to understand, change, and sustain improvements for their organisations' current safety culture and performance. Links need to be clarified and strengthened between safety systems (including training as well as your core WHS system), safety symbols, and safety behaviour. Every organisation should lock on to discretionary effort and get people thinking forward to creating a safe future, not just reacting to safety incidents as they arise.

Leaders create the safety culture that creates the results – good or bad

Leaders often don't realise how symbolic their behaviour is to others at work. In order to get the results they want to see, leaders must set the safety standard and refuse to walk past anything that doesn't meet it. The leaders who drive the strongest safety results engage their people in creating change they believe in and can implement.

The current pandemic presents an opportunity for leaders to demonstrate this every day. This is not just in terms of wearing facemasks indoors, checking in, checking out, and social distancing. It's also about creating conditions so that people can get help and support if they are struggling with the isolation and added pressures that lockdowns can cause. After all, mental health is a critical component of work health and safety.

It is the responsibility of leaders to put the right conditions in place for people to work safely. This means that leaders must have a clear view of strategic risk rather than focusing at the level of

operational safety only. Leaders need to spend time getting the framework right – ignoring policies and procedures in favour of more exciting safety stuff risks building a shoddy foundation for safety performance. To get the bigger picture stuff right, we work with leaders to implement a straightforward safety culture toolkit that works on individual, team, and organisational levels.

Foster a positive, strong safety culture

It's critical to have the right safety culture toolkit in place. But that's not enough. Leaders need to be vulnerable enough so that others feel comfortable giving feedback to continually improve. If you're a leader, would your people call you out for your behaviour if they didn't think it was up to scratch? That's the acid test. If they wouldn't, you've got some work to do. Setting the stage for everyone – team leaders and team members – to do their part means that your team will have the confidence and capability to contribute to positive safety outcomes. We're proud to help our clients sustain strong safety results, and it's a shift I want to see for every single organisation.

For more information on strengthening your organisational safety culture, contact LKS Quaero at enquiries@lksquaero.com or (02) 4910 4048.



Sam Robinson is Managing Director of LKS Quaero. He works in leadership development, change management, organisational structure, and culture. Sam helps leaders to succeed by connecting people, relationships, systems, and structures. He has worked across the public, private, and not-for-profit sectors.



Hayden Health & Safety are proud to announce that we have just added *Rapid Antigen Testing (RAT) for COVID-19 to our services.*

These tests are highly accurate and you will have the results in 15-20 minutes, not days!
These tests can be conducted either on your site or at our new premises in Cardiff NSW.

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Plus an online store for all your PPE and site safety needs!



For any enquiries, please visit our website or call us on **1300 HAYDEN**
www.haydenhs.com.au

Locking down fires and fines

While Hunter businesses comply with COVID safety lockdowns, lockdowns are placing even greater importance on businesses' fire safety and lesser-known changes to fire compliance rules.

Statistically, disrupted operating hours and absences from the workplace expose business sites and assets to greater fire risk. But as Ken Thomas, Managing Director of Total Fire Solutions explains, there's another reason he's urging local companies to use lockdown time to ensure they're fire compliant.

"Not only did the fire safety rules change in 2020, but councils are now far more stringent in enforcing them. They're stepping up their inspections and issuing fines for non-compliance and late submissions," Ken said.

With some of those penalties exceeding \$2,500 and fire protection and compliance being complex for businesses to manage themselves, Ken pointed to Total Fire Solutions' assurance. "It can be a real minefield for our clients and distract from their core business. So we look after everything and back that up with a guarantee to pay any fine issued, with the certainty one won't be, given our expertise in this field".

Those familiar with the process up until now will know an Annual Fire Safety Statements (AFSS) must be submitted to council to certify their fire safety measures have been adequately maintained over the past year and are fit for purpose.

However, that AFSS now requires sign-off by a Competent Fire Safety Practitioner (CFSP) and not just the property owner. This requires the specialist accreditation Total Fire Solutions has invested in. This accreditation also holds Total Fire Solutions accountable for the assessment made, and Ken welcomes this accountability. "It aligns with our proven commitment to best practise and ethics within the fire protection industry," he said.

As specialists in commercial and industrial fire safety solutions,

with more than four thousand clients, and two decades in operation, Total Fire Solutions has fielded countless inquiries. Their answers give insight into the industry-leading role it's committed to.

New customers: do businesses always have to upgrade their fire safety equipment? "Definitely not. Buildings are only required to comply with the standard applicable at the time of their construction or development approval. It's usual however to find those initial compliance requirements haven't been met. In this instance, our technicians can make any necessary adjustments to meet council-based requirements, add value and mitigate risk, as cost-effectively as possible".

Existing customers: why are new mandatory changes found when you've been servicing our building for years? "Historically, we took a maintenance approach to existing fire safety systems reliant on those having been compliant at time of installation. In some cases unfortunately, this isn't always the case. While this reflects poorly on the fire protection industry of the past, it steels our commitment to set the best practice standards for the industry today".

The well-known disruption caused by COVID may be the perfect opportunity to meet the lesser-known new fire safety compliance requirements of your local council. Might lockdown be a time to have your fire safety compliancy assessed, so you're fully protected against fire and fines?

If you would like more information on the fire compliance rules, or to undertake a fire compliance audit for your business please reach out to Total Fire Solutions. Total Fire Solutions are following all government COVID safe practices and hygiene to bring you the safest possible methods to ensure the reliability of all your Fire Protection Systems and equipment. **You can reach them on 1800 952 766 or visit the website totalfire.com.au.**



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Winners of the Hunter Safety Awards announced

Following the postponement of the 2020 Hunter Safety Awards, 13 winners were announced in August across a range of organisational and individual categories.

The Hunter's biggest night in the WHS calendar was due to be held Friday 6 August at the Newcastle Exhibition and Convention Centre (NEX) - after being postponed from March 2020 - but was cancelled due to the latest COVID-19 restrictions.

Hunter Safety Awards Founder, Sarah-Jane Dunford, said while the decision was devastating, it was the right thing to do.

"As the leading safety event in the Hunter Region, we had to lead by example and made the heartbreaking decision to cancel the event," Sarah-Jane said.

"While the event was cancelled, we still wanted to recognise the hard work and achievements of the winners."

Now in its fifth year, the Awards recognised businesses across 13 different categories of health and safety, with a further exploration of mental health being evident across submitted entries.

Major winners included Newcastle Coal Infrastructure Group (NCIG), who walked away with the prestigious 'Gold' Safety Helmet in the WHS Business of the Year category.

Sarah-Jane said NCIG's dedication to implementing innovative health and wellbeing programs across their workplace was a key asset that stood out in their entry.

"Newcastle Coal Infrastructure Group's entry demonstrated an approach to safety that embraced all the important facets of WHS, which is what gave them that award-winning factor," Sarah-Jane said.

"Their program 'Move For Your Mind' is a great example of how the organisation are leading the way in their approach to safety."

NCIG Chief Executive Officer, Aaron Johansen, said that it was an honour to be recognised in the Hunter for their approach to safety.

"It is an achievement that reflects the commitment shown to Health and Safety by everyone on our site," Aaron said.

"Our Health and Safety culture at NCIG is driven by real passion and it is incredible to be a part of a workforce that enthusiastically gets involved in programs rolled out on site. We are very proud of both our Safety Vitals Program and our Move for your Mind initiative that have contributed to this award.

"We will continue to uphold the positive health and safety culture at NCIG as we see the benefits in our workplace every day."

Best Health & Wellbeing Program (Large Organisation) was awarded to Daracon Group.

Their 12 week program, Workplace POWER (Preventing Obesity Without Eating like a Rabbit) was an innovative, evidence-based weight loss program developed by The University of Newcastle and Hunter Medical Research Institute.

Jenny Rudder of Singleton Council was awarded WHS Champion of the Year for her dedication and commitment to her role as the Work, Health and Safety Advisor for the Council.

Laing O'Rourke was awarded Most Innovative WHS Idea (Large Organisation) for developing Toolbox Spotter, a world-leading artificial intelligence computer vision system which was optimised for heavy industries.

The judges were impressed by the dedication and innovation every finalist and winner showed in their entries.

While the awards were unable to go ahead this year, the 2022 Hunter Safety Awards will be held on Friday 19 March 2022. Tickets will be on sale soon.



Finalists for the Hunter Safety Awards included:

Ampcontrol
Aqua Assets Pty Limited
ARTC
Asset Training
Asplundh
Body and Mind 2000
Brimble Rail
Carter Heavy Haulage & Transport
CHD Partners
Corfad Civil and Construction Pty Ltd
Critical Alpha
Daracon
Ethos Health
Great Lakes FM
Hunter Valley Tours
John Holland Rail
Keolis Downer
LabourCo
Laing O'Rourke
Mainstream Industries
Newcastle Coal Infrastructure Group (NCIG)
North Construction & Building
Norsu Group
Novaskill
Novecom
Programmed
Safe Industries Australia
Singleton Council
Tony White Group
Warner Company
WesTrac



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Awards 'Gold Helmet'
Business of the Year.**

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The full list of winners were:

AWARD	SPONSOR	WINNER
WHS Business of the Year	AGL	NCIG
Best Health and Wellbeing Program (Large Organisation)	Sonic HealthPlus	Daracon
Best Health and Wellbeing Program (SME)	Tomago Aluminium	Body and Mind 2000
Best WHS Improvement (Large Organisation)	ARTC	WesTrac
Best WHS Improvement (SME)	Ampcontrol	Norsu Group
Best WHS Management System (Large Organisation)	Red Insight	Asplundh
Best WHS Management System (SME)	One Touch Contractors	Mainstream Industries
Most Innovative WHS Idea (Large Organisation)	WesTrac	Laing O'Rourke
Most Innovative WHS Idea (SME)	3M	Novecom
WHS Student of the Year	AGL	Jamie Collins, Glencore
WHS Champion of the Year	University of Newcastle	Jenny Rudder, Singleton Council
Young WHS Leader of the Year	uvex	Aaron Jones
Best WHS Training Program	Hume Doors	Ethos Health

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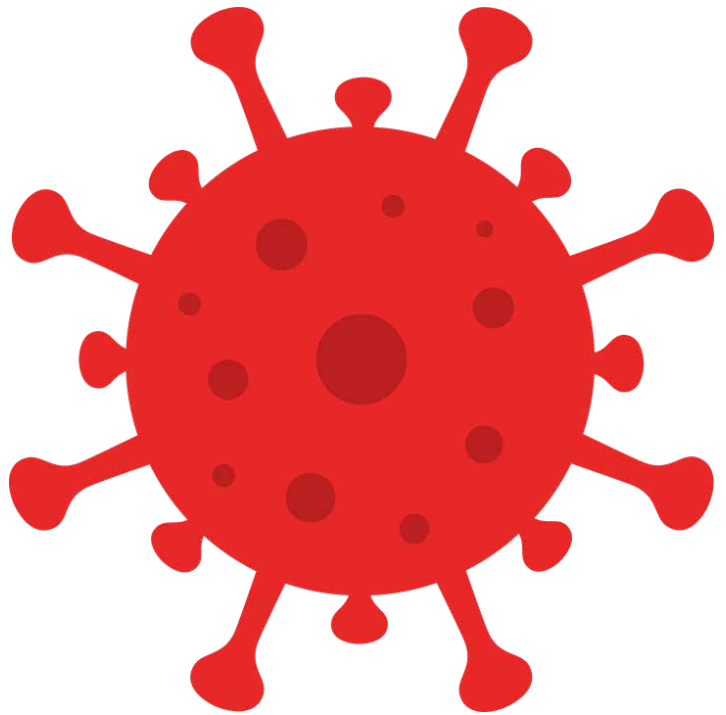
THE ONGOING SPREAD OF COVID-19 IS A STARK REMINDER TO ALL OF US OF THE NEED TO BE VIGILANT

Stephen Galilee
CEO, NSW Minerals Council

First and foremost, we need to continue to protect the health and safety of our workforce and our mining communities. This also enables us to continue making the economic contribution so many people rely upon.

Health and safety is the NSW mining industry's number one priority and our sector has implemented strict COVID-19 Protocols to help our mining workforce, mining families and regional communities stay safe during this challenging time.

Our industry is also working closely with the NSW and Commonwealth Governments, regulators and other resource industry associations to minimise the risk of COVID-19 in mining communities.



Mining operations have implemented extensive workforce protection measures, in line with advice from NSW Health, which includes enhanced cleaning and sanitation facilities, work from home policies implemented where possible, social distancing in crib rooms and essential indoor areas and strict restrictions on visitors and workers from the Greater Sydney area.

We also strongly encourage everyone to get vaccinated as soon as possible.

These measures help to protect people and communities. They also help the economy. Our local mining industry remains in a good position to help rebuild our state and support communities across the Hunter region.

Working together, we can ensure the Hunter emerges from this latest challenge with a strong and reliable economic base that will provide jobs and investment for decades to come.

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NSW PUTS FOOT ON THE GREEN GAS WITH HYDROGEN PLATFORM

The rollout of NSW hydrogen hubs is set to be accelerated, with the establishment of a collaboration platform to bring together potential hydrogen producers and users.

Energy Minister Matt Kean said the platform is about connecting sophisticated market players with new and emerging hydrogen users to fuel the development of hydrogen hubs in NSW.

"Green hydrogen will play a massive role in our future economic prosperity and decarbonising our economy," Mr Kean said.

"We know that the best way to make green hydrogen commercially viable in Australia and NSW is to get to scale as quickly as possible.

"We also know our hydrogen hubs have the potential to become clean manufacturing powerhouses and we need to move fast, but that challenge is too big for one business alone.

"That is why we are bringing decision-makers and investors who want to deploy hydrogen into their businesses and industries together to help deliver hydrogen in a way that will drive scale, reduce costs, focus innovation and grow our workforce capabilities."

Australian Hydrogen Council Chief Executive Officer, Fiona Simon, said "NSW's hydrogen collaboration platform is a great tool to drive industry development and hub creation in NSW. It will bring organisations together to collaborate on NSW's hydrogen future."

As part of the Net Zero Industry and Innovation Program, the NSW Government has committed a minimum of \$70 million to develop hydrogen hubs in the Hunter and Illawarra regions.

Stakeholders that submitted a hydrogen-related registration of interest to the Net Zero Industry and Innovation Program will automatically receive an invitation to participate. Other

organisations can get involved by contacting the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment's, Hydrogen and Clean Energy team at hydrogen@planning.nsw.gov.au.

AUSTRALIAN MINING EXPORTS SET NEW RECORDS

Australian mining has continued to support the nation's export and economic success with new records set for total export value and a range of mineral commodities.

New export data released on 5 August by the Australian Bureau of Statistics for the 2020/21 full financial year show the extraordinary magnitude and resilience of Australia's mining exports.

The mining industry has generated a new record high of almost \$300 billion in export revenue for the Australian economy.

The array of new records set includes:

- Record resources exports of \$299.6 billion (including minerals, coal, metals, oil and gas)
- A record high trade surplus of \$89 billion
- The highest ever share of export revenue contributed by resources (66 per cent)
- Record iron ore exports of \$151.9 billion, 33 per cent of total export revenue
- Record gold exports of \$28.4 billion
- Record copper exports of \$11.5 billion.

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CSIRO ENERGY SITE TO LEAD EMISSIONS TARGET

CSIRO's Newcastle Energy Centre will be a demonstration site for the national science agency's net zero emissions targets, as part of a broader focus to boost science and sustainability outcomes across its facilities and operations.

A decade after CSIRO and collaborators designed, built and verified Australia's first zero emission house, CSIRO is aiming to achieve net zero emissions for: its Newcastle Energy Centre by 2025, all of CSIRO by 2030, and all of its indirect emissions and value chains by 2050.

CSIRO Chief Executive Larry Marshall said CSIRO is uniquely positioned to use breakthrough science to develop, implement and demonstrate effective pathways to net zero emissions.

"As a large 100 year old organisation spread across 55 sites nationally, CSIRO has many challenges to emissions reduction, but we believe if we can do it, it will inspire other large companies to leverage Australian science to travel the path to net zero emissions," Dr Marshall said.

"CSIRO is in a strong position to make science real, by translating it straight from our established energy lab and into our operations, while also directly assisting our industry partners to work towards their own net zero emission ambitions.

"CSIRO has been actively reducing its carbon emissions over the last five years, and we are now anticipating 70 per cent reduction."

"Australian science can accelerate this transformation using cutting edge technologies in solar, wind, hydrogen, next generation batteries, predictive analytics and energy efficiency technologies, and of course our corporate fleet of electric vehicles with on-site solar charging, and a hydrogen-powered car," Dr Marshall said.

"CSIRO also manages many of Australia's landmark national facilities which serve the entire research sector. Our longer-term plans will really put our science to the test as we try to transition this critical national infrastructure, like our national collections and the Australian Centre for Disease Preparedness, towards net zero emissions.

"We are exploring innovative options such as using hydrogen to power future research vessels or applying renewable or hybrid energy to power remote facilities."

CSIRO Newcastle Site Leader Gregory Wilson said the Newcastle Energy Centre was ideally placed to lead the way for CSIRO.

"Our Newcastle Energy Centre has an established track record for developing and evaluating new ways to drive energy efficiency, generate renewable energy, store energy and reduce emissions. It is also home to the largest solar thermal array of its kind in the Southern Hemisphere," Dr Wilson said.

"We have the opportunity to take the best of our science and testing and apply it across our site which already features 425 kW of solar and wind energy infrastructure, and 600 kWh of battery storage.

"New initiatives that will help us to achieve net zero by 2025 include the conversion of gas systems to electric, electrification of our fleet, additional onsite renewable energy generation, optimised control of onsite energy storage, and the uptake of clean-energy power purchasing across all of our sites."

The energy targets are part of a broader sustainability refresh for CSIRO, which brings together plans to reduce its environmental footprint and initiatives focussed on organisational culture, gender equity, responsible purchasing and sustainable property strategies.

SANDVIK ACQUIRES DSI UNDERGROUND JOINT VENTURES, ROCBOLT TECHNOLOGIES

Sandvik's acquisition of DSI Underground, the global leader in ground support and reinforcement products, systems and solutions for the underground mining and tunneling industries, was closed in July. The acquisition included DSI's ownership stake in four joint ventures (Rocbolt Technologies) based in China, South Africa, Mongolia and Australia.

On August 3, 2021, Sandvik signed and completed three agreements to acquire the Joint Venture partner's (Jennmar) share of the Rocbolt Technologies JVs in China, South Africa and Mongolia. Jennmar will continue to be a JV partner in Australia.

Rocbolt Technologies will be reported in the Ground Support Division of business area Sandvik Mining and Rock Solutions.

The DSI acquisition, including purchase price allocation, accounting treatments related to the acquisition, and full consolidation of the three JVs, will in total be dilutive to the EBIT margin for Sandvik Mining and Rock Solutions by up to 300 basis points during the second half of 2021. In 2022 the EBIT margin for Sandvik Mining and Rock Solutions will be diluted around 170 basis points.

AMPCONTROL AND PPK MINING EQUIPMENT INTRODUCE ELECTRIC VEHICLE

A new agreement between two innovative Australian manufacturing and technology companies is set to deliver a range of new battery-electric vehicle (BEV) solutions for underground mining applications.

The collaboration will see the installation of the latest world-class BEV technology designed by Ampcontrol into new PPK Mining Equipment (PPKME) personnel carrier vehicles. The companies will work together to also retrofit diesel drive trains in a range of other vehicles manufactured by PPKME, including the COALTRAM flameproof and explosion protected diesel Load Haul Dump utility vehicle.

PPKME Global Head of Mining Dale McNamara said, "This is a fantastic opportunity to combine our respective industry expertise to introduce the first new Australian designed and built battery-electric personnel carrier vehicle for the underground coal industry. Expanding our relationship to install Ampcontrol BEV technology into our COALTRAM utility vehicles will substantially benefit our customers and employees by developing new vehicles for all underground mines."

Ampcontrol BEV technology builds upon the company's expertise and industry reputation, centred around developing engineering solutions for use in hazardous environments, including underground coal mines.

"We are thrilled to be working with the team at PPK Mining Equipment to power their fleet of industry-renowned underground vehicles. Our new BEV technology lets our partners and customers power their existing equipment, converting from diesel to battery-electric energy, and new vehicles under development with a solution where safety and efficiency are absolutely paramount," added Ampcontrol Managing Director & CEO Rod Henderson.



The new battery-electric personnel carrier vehicle for the underground coal industry

Commenting on potential further opportunities, PPK Group Ltd Executive Chairman Robin Levison also added, "Given the proximity of Ampcontrol and PPKME workshops within the Hunter region of NSW, the geographical spread of customers and distinct areas of expertise, I see this unique "electrification project" as the first step on a broader collaboration opportunity between Ampcontrol, PPK Group and our subsidiary company LIS Energy Ltd. LIS Energy continues to commercialise its proprietary Lithium Sulphur battery technology through its joint venture research agreement with Deakin University; we are very enthusiastic about the potential future opportunities this project could present."

"We are looking forward to developing a strong association between PPKME and Ampcontrol, combining our engineering expertise, advanced technology solutions, and world-class manufacturing to deliver the future in battery electric vehicles for our industry," added Rod Henderson.

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The doctor says, "Larry, everything looks great. How are you doing mentally and emotionally? Are you at peace with God?"

Larry replies, "God and I are tight. He knows I have poor eyesight, so He's fixed it so when I get up in the middle of the night to go to the bathroom, poof! The light goes on. When I'm done, poof! The light goes off!"

Wow, that's incredible," the doctor says.

A little later in the day, the doctor calls Larry's wife.

"Bonnie," he says, "Larry is doing fine! But I had to call you because I'm in awe of his relationship with God. Is it true that he gets up during the night, and poof, the light goes on in the bathroom, and when he's done, poof, the light goes off?"

"Oh, no," exclaims Bonnie. "He's peeing in the refrigerator again!"

A man walks into a library and asks the librarian for books about paranoia.

She whispers, "They're right behind you!"

A poodle and a collie are walking together when the poodle suddenly unloads on his friend. "My life is a mess," he says. "My owner is mean, my girlfriend ran away with a schnauzer, and I'm as jittery as a cat."

"Why don't you go see a psychiatrist?" suggests the collie.

"I can't," says the poodle. "I'm not allowed on the couch."

A man was being sold a very cheap suit. "But the left arm is a lot longer than the right arm," he complained.

"That's why the suit is such a bargain," the sales clerk explained. "Just cock your left shoulder up a little, like this, and tuck this left lapel under your chin a bit, like this."

"But the right leg is way too short," argued the customer.

"No problem," the sales clerk answered. "Just keep your right knee bent a little at all times, walk like this, and no one will notice. That's why this suit is only thirty dollars."

Finally, the fellow bought the suit, cocked his left shoulder into the air, tucked the suit's left lapel under his chin, bent his right knee, and limped out of the store toward his car.

Two doctors happened along and noticed him. "Good heavens," the first doctor said to the second, "look at that poor crippled fellow."

"Yeah," answered the second doctor. "But doesn't that suit fit great?"

A skeleton walks into a bar.

The bartender says, "What'll you have?"

The skeleton says, "Gimme a beer and a mop."

A Canadian park ranger is giving some ramblers a warning about bears, "Brown bears are usually harmless. They avoid contact with humans so we suggest you attach small bells to your rucksacks and give the bears time to get out of your way. However, grizzly bears are extremely dangerous. If you see any grizzly-bear droppings leave the area immediately."

"So how do we know if they're grizzly bear droppings?" asks one of the ramblers.


"It's easy," replies the ranger. "They're full of small bells."

QUOTE OF THE MONTH


"Many of life's failures are people who did not realise how close they were to success when they gave up"

- Thomas Edison

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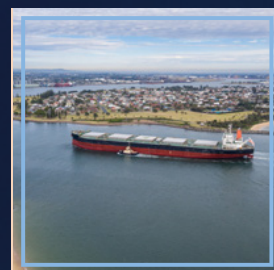
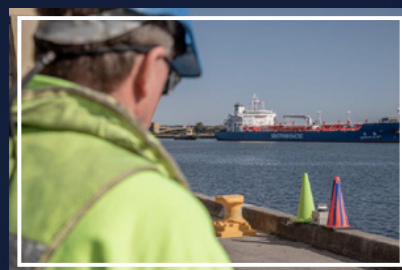
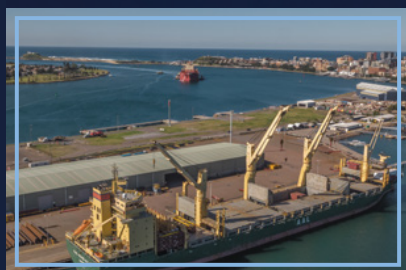


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